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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## THE JUNIOR-COLLEGE MOVEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

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The remarkable development of the American high school has in the last few years created a considerable number of altogether new educational problems. The college and the university are often directly and always indirectly affected by the policy adopted by our high schools, and in the present junior-college movement they are likely to find their own organization and procedure radically affected. Responding to various motives occasional high schools have for a great many years past offered work somewhat in advance of the college-preparatory work with which the curriculum of most of our high schools in this part of the world comes to a close. In certain instances this advanced work frankly undertook to follow the lines of the work of the Freshman year in the ordinary American college, and was organized explicitly with a view to supplying this special program. In other cases the content of the advanced work was more incidental, if not accidental, and materially more limited in amount. Within the past ten years we have had several instances of high schools undertaking to supply two years of work in advance of the usual four-year high-school course, and in this case often calling themselves junior colleges. More recently we find in the state of California, as the result of special

<sup>1</sup> A paper read before the meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, March 17, 1915, Chicago, Illinois.

legislation, a state-wide system by virtue of which high schools are authorized to enter upon this junior-college plan. A considerable number of schools have already availed themselves of the opportunity thus offered, and experience is rapidly in the making as regards the advantages and disadvantages which attach to such an arrangement. In Illinois we have had for a dozen years or more at Joliet an interesting and highly instructive experiment going on before us on the same lines. Many members of this Association will probably recall the similar experiment substantially contemporary with the Joliet plan which was launched at Goshen, Indiana, and which for purely local reasons has been discontinued. Within the last few years two of our great Chicago high schools, the Lane and Crane technical schools, have developed vigorous junior-college organizations which promise to develop in the most successful way.<sup>1</sup> Still more recently at Grand Rapids and Detroit similar enterprises have been set afoot, and many other schools throughout the general territory of this Association have either made actual beginnings in this direction or are laying plans for such a beginning in the near future. There seems therefore to be no reasonable question that the movement has come to stay, and the problem now before us is its wise guidance and the discounting so far as possible of the dangers and difficulties to which it may be naturally exposed.

At the request of the officers of this organization I have attempted to secure some expressions of opinion and some statements of actual fact regarding the circumstances as they now exist in the central and western parts of the United States. Within the limits of such a paper as this it is quite out of the question to attempt a detailed summary of my findings, but I can perhaps give a correct impression of the general situation.

My report deals with replies to a questionnaire sent to nineteen universities and seven colleges, members of the North Central Association, or institutions similar in character, to the south and west of this territory. Eleven high schools with junior-college departments have reported.

Of the nineteen universities replying among which are represented most of the important state universities, although not all,

<sup>1</sup>A junior-college curriculum has been also established this year in the Senn School.

three have definite arrangements whereby junior colleges conducted by high schools and complying with certain requirements are approved, and their graduates when properly certificated allowed to enter the third year of the college work. Several others have recently announced arrangements whereby a similar agreement with certain specified high schools will be approved, and in at least two instances, i.e., the University of Missouri and the University of Texas, the state university has entered into relations with certain private collegiate institutions, whereby the latter become distinctly junior colleges and send their graduates into the third year of the university work. Other universities, notably Chicago and Wisconsin, have in earlier days made similar experiments. All the other universities in the group, constituting a decided majority, grant credit for fifth- and sixth-year work done in the high school only upon some form of examination. Sometimes this consists of an actual examination of the conventional kind; sometimes the result is attained by requiring the student to do successfully more advanced work in the line in which he asks for advanced credit. In other cases there is no requirement made for the continuation of this special type of work, but the demand is made that the student's general record shall be of high grade for the first year after his entrance into the university if the credits asked for are to be permanently recognized. Some of the institutions report that the question has as yet assumed no actual significance for them because of the absence in their part of the country of any high schools undertaking to do work beyond the fourth year. This is notably true of certain universities in the states just to the west of the Mississippi states.

The practice of the seven colleges replying to the inquiries show on the whole something of the same variety of practice peculiar to the universities, but in no case has the writer chanced to encounter a reputable college which has as yet entered into any such definite relations with junior colleges based on high-school foundations. No such college has reported itself as positively refusing to consider credentials of this kind, but only one or two indicate that they are presented with any frequency, and it appears that in such cases the treatment accorded a student is based on individual investigation of the merits of the particular case.

It would appear, therefore, that we are dealing in this general matter with a situation varying very considerably in the different parts of the country and presenting little or no uniformity as yet in the educational practice of the higher institutions in their treatment of the credentials offered by junior-college high schools.

It is perhaps not without interest to find that in the general comments offered by the presidents and deans of the institutions replying, there is on the whole a distinctly more liberal attitude represented by the universities than by the colleges. This is perhaps only what one might expect, and it should be coupled with the further statement that some of the universities are quite as conservative in their attitude as any of the colleges. Where, however, the press of undergraduate students is so great as seriously to embarrass the facilities of the institution (this is the case in many of the large state institutions as well as in some of those under private endowment), it is not unnatural that a welcoming hand should be held out to any movement which promises to lessen the number of these undergraduates. On the other hand, in institutions which find themselves in a constant struggle to secure as many students as they would like (and this is undoubtedly the case with some excellent colleges), it is not to be wondered at that something less than unqualified enthusiasm should be felt for a policy which promises to decrease the number of first- and second-year students reporting in colleges courses.

It seems difficult to determine just when the idea of the junior college first secured public recognition as an essential contribution to our educational machinery. President W. R. Harper was certainly one of the early advocates of a somewhat sharp distinction between the junior college and the senior college. In the early organization of the University of Chicago he attempted to embody his ideas by a distinction in the organization of the two divisions of the University, and by emphasizing as against the collegiate character of the first two years of work, the university character of that offered in the latter part of the college course. It will also be remembered that he attempted to enlist the interest of a group of institutions in becoming junior colleges with no expectation of carrying work beyond this point, and with the definite intent to

leave to the universities the conduct of more advanced academic interests. In this undertaking he was only partially successful, but it seems not improbable that the program as he had it in mind will now after the passage of this score or more of years gain recognition in a slightly different form. President James of the University of Illinois appears in the eighties to have attempted to interest the authorities of the University of Pennsylvania in a development somewhat similar to the one we are now observing; and while the project had no direct relation to the high schools or to separate institutions called junior colleges, it will be recalled that in the early eighties the University of Michigan undertook to establish within its own confines a distinction between university work and college work, the practical effect of which was to obligate a student who chose so to do to carry on the last two years of his collegiate work in a rather more individualistic fashion than is usual, to invite his specialization in a major and two minor fields with the presentation of a thesis in the major field. No doubt many other instances might be cited of general educational movements looking to the breaking down of the conventional lines of demarkation between the high school and academy on the one hand and the college on the other, the motivation to not a little of which is to be found in the conviction that the period between the present four-year high school and the four-year college does not mark any real educational transition, and that most of our Freshman work and much of our Sophomore work is purely secondary in character, whereas there is a period some time toward the end of the second college year where a genuine transition does occur in the case of a very large proportion of the students in all stronger colleges and universities. It is of course well understood that our American practice is widely at variance with Continental usages.

The immediate motivation to the present junior-college movement has, however, not come from the universities—however much they may have served the cause through occasional educational leaders and occasional agitation of educational ideals—but rather from the secondary schools and from the intelligent public that supports them. We have become familiar with the cry that the high school is the plain man's college. We are no longer so much

disposed to argue this point as we are to inquire, "What of it?" and if so, what is the next thing to be done about it? Intelligent schoolmen have not only been busied in attempting to make these schools supply more nearly than before the actual human demands of the young people in the towns, cities, and country districts which they serve, through enrichment of the curriculum with types of study generally taboo in the schools given over to preparation for college; but they have also been quick to urge the wisdom of adding longitudinally as well as horizontally to the resources of these schools, and through the entire structure from top to bottom they have sought by intensive improvement of the quality of the instruction offered to make these schools so attractive that every boy and girl would wish to stay in them as long as possible, and as a result of such residence would be found far better equipped than the older brothers and sisters had been for actual entrance on the practical work of life into which four-fifths of them are promptly drafted.

In response to considerations such as these it is altogether natural, especially in the case of places somewhat remote from the better colleges and universities, that the idea should have presented itself of developing on top of the high school part at least of the work customarily offered in collegiate institutions, whether the latter were ostensibly of the liberal arts variety or of the vocational and professional variety. A good deal can certainly be said for the practical desirability of keeping for another year or two within the influences of the home boys and girls who otherwise might go to college where their immaturity often exposes them to dangers which they would escape by longer residence at home. Moreover, a good many young people find it impossible to go away to college because of economic considerations, and still others are deterred from such attendance upon college, even when not actually prevented from it. To be sure, there is a good deal of evidence to indicate that anything which would serve to discourage some of our applicants for college entrance from actual attendance on the institution would be enormously in the interest of all concerned. On the other hand, there can be no question at all that to bring directly to the student's own door collegiate opportunities of a substantial kind is in very many cases to render a service of the

highest value both to the individual and to the community to which he belongs.

It is perhaps due to the fertility of resources bred by life in the far West, but more likely to the peculiar geographical conditions represented in the state of California, that in that state we meet with the earliest developed general state system for building junior colleges on high-school foundations, and that here the movement has gone farthest and most successfully. It will be very surprising if the success which has attended this California experiment is not widely imitated and probably improved upon in other parts of the country.

It is not without interest to remark the different ideals which already are making themselves felt in the organization of these junior-college schools. In some instances the attempt is frankly made to reproduce outright the work given in some model institution, in this case commonly the neighboring state university. This conception clearly involves the idea that the junior-college high school should attempt to bring forthwith directly to hand the very same work done in the college or university itself, and done so far as possible in the very same way. On the other hand, there is a feeling in some quarters that the junior-college high school ought to strike out on its own lines in accordance with the special needs of its own community, and that it should specialize particularly in industrial, engineering, and vocational directions, with its main interest centered on young people who will not go beyond the instruction it offers, rather than on those who are expecting to continue in some larger institution. In other words, we have over again here the old schism with which we are so familiar, separating those who believe that the high school ought to conform primarily to the requirements for college entrance as against those who take an opposite view. We are most of us familiar with the intermediate position which alleges that the two things are in no final sense antagonistic to one another.

In the actual organization of these California schools, of which some seven have been kind enough to reply to my inquiries, I judge that there is a certain diversity of administrative practice with regard to their internal organization. In some cases they



apparently have attempted to organize the junior college altogether separately from the high school proper. They have a separate faculty and an entirely separate student body, and desire at the earliest possible date to have a separate building. At the other extreme is a tendency to obliterate all distinction from the four-year high school, to add two years of college work, but in no sense to magnify a differentiation of one program from the other. A compromise between these two extremes is seemingly the commoner tendency at the present moment.

The development of the junior-college high school seems on the whole to be so natural a consequence of our general public educational system that one can hardly cherish anything but sympathetic interest in the undertaking and hold one's self ready so far as possible to assist in a wholesome line of growth. Certain obvious dangers we must all recognize the moment attention is called to them. Not a few high schools are at present unable to do thoroughly even four years of secondary work. They lack equipment both of laboratories and of libraries; they lack adequately trained teachers; and they lack financial resources materially to improve their conditions in the immediate future. For such schools to consider the addition of a fifth and sixth year of work is a form of folly which local pride is unfortunately likely to encourage, but which ought to be described by outside disinterested parties in the frankest and most unequivocal terms. The result of such enterprises is sure to be confusion worse confounded. The first obligation of every school is to do thoroughly well its elementary work.

Again, there are many schools in communities of moderate size doing with admirable thoroughness the work which they pretend to attempt, schools which are little by little adjusting themselves more completely to the needs of their own communities, schools upon which intelligent and unbiased opinion can only entertain one verdict—and that of a thoroughly flattering kind. For many such schools the attempt to take on a fifth and a sixth year of work, even if there be a modicum of demand for it, is likely to prove itself highly ill advised, for it is reasonably sure to mean overloading teachers already carrying their full burden of work, it is almost

certain to involve attempting results for which the available facilities are wholly inadequate, and as a consequence to substitute for a well-organized school doing faithfully and intelligently the thing within its reasonable reach, a shoddy, ill-adjusted, and unsuccessful institution exposing itself to legitimate criticism and ultimate loss of public confidence. Only on the basis of adequate state aid could schools belonging to either of these two groups properly enter on junior-college work.

Contrasted with either of these types of institutions is a considerable group, for the most part found in the larger centers of population, but in a few instances located in smaller but well-to-do communities, where the work of a junior college can be well afforded by the constituency, and where not a few obvious advantages are sure to follow from the establishment of such a school. We have become accustomed through the notable example of one or two institutions in our own country to the idea that a great city may well support a municipal college or university much after the fashion in which state universities are supported. Such institutions are undoubtedly likely to be rapidly multiplied, and the junior-college high school is presumably in big cities the advance agent of this particular kind of educational prosperity.

Certain desiderata in the organization of the junior college on high-school foundations may reasonably be formulated as substantially essential to real success. The first of these without any great question is adequate financial support. We have certainly learned one bitter lesson in this country, which is that education like other earthly blessings costs money, and that one cannot secure it in its better qualities without being ready to pay the market price. Certainly to found a junior college without reasonable provisions for the added expenses which must be involved is unjustifiable from every point of view. The temptation to a contrary view is subtle and pervasive. In a school not badly crowded with students it may seem quite possible by a little rearrangement of the schedule or possibly by the introduction of one additional instructor to free sufficient time of the teacher of mathematics, the teacher of language, and the teacher of history to give courses to a small group of students ostensibly corresponding to the Freshman courses in

college. No doubt something can be done in the smaller schools by rearrangements of this character, but if the more advanced courses are really to be given satisfactorily it will be found that the small schools must almost certainly add to their facilities of laboratories and libraries, and that the advanced courses if they are to be given in a reputable way will require very considerable inroads on the time of the teacher and in some cases will, for their proper conduct, require distinctly more advanced training than some of the teachers will have received.

I am not prepared to urge that every junior college based on a high-school foundation must have its faculty completely occupied by the work of the college. Indeed, I can see some obvious practical advantages in having the teachers who carry the advanced work of the fourth year of the high school in direct personal touch with the work of the fifth and sixth years. I am quite convinced that a very large part of the friction which has been generated between the colleges and the high schools has been because the teachers in each institution, and particularly the college teachers, were so hopelessly unfamiliar with the actual conditions of work in the other type of institution. But whatever the decision regarding this issue, it is surely not open to question that the professional training to be demanded of teachers who do this junior-college work should be made distinctly more severe than in actual practice the demands have been which high-school teachers have had to comply with. I note that the California schedule demands that the Master's degree at least shall have been received from a reputable institution by the teachers who undertake the junior-college work. This seems on the whole a conservative and modest requirement. The requirement of the University of Illinois is similar but not quite so definitely formulated.

Admission to such a junior college is a privilege restricted in some schools to the really high-grade students. In others graduation from the fourth high-school year is all that is required. To discuss the merits of this restriction is impossible at this time. Obviously, however, it raises a question very fundamental for the ideals of these institutions.

There certainly should be, and in many of these institutions is, a limitation on the number of hours per week that a teacher may be called upon to give. Moreover, there should be assurance that the methods of instruction are essentially collegiate in character.

Evidently there are three main groups of interests to be safeguarded in the situation which we have been considering. The first is that of the colleges and universities; the second, that of the high schools; and the third, that of the general public which supports both. It may be thought that such a distinction of interests is artificial and unreal, but in point of fact it corresponds with a good deal of exactness to the cleavage into parties which characterizes educational as well as political life. I have given them in inverse order of what I consider to be their intrinsic importance and directly in the order of their ability to protect their own interests. The colleges and universities are on the whole best able to safeguard these interests. The high schools are in general exposed to more sources of injury and such as are on the whole less easily controlled. The general public is in the long run best able to protect itself, but at the outset is least likely to find its immediate interests championed by intelligent and forceful leaders.

It goes without saying that in the last analysis a sane estimate of the situation must be based upon the largest and most far-seeing considerations. It must be in no narrow sense partisan, it must not be provincial, it must not be ignorant. In speaking, therefore, to the three groups of points raised by the distinctions just drawn, we are frankly dealing in a purely tentative manner with the more obvious and obtrusive angles of the case as they present themselves in terms of our current practices and prejudices.

Taking the matter from the point of view of the colleges first, it is clear that if the junior-college movement in the high schools develops with rapidity, there will presumably be a material decline in the number of Freshman and Sophomore students in our strictly collegiate institutions. This result will be welcomed enthusiastically by the administrative authorities of many of the larger institutions, which are literally staggering under the press of undergraduates; it will be much less enthusiastically greeted by the

small and struggling college to which numbers are absolutely indispensable for its continued life. We may therefore reasonably expect to hear from these latter sources a great deal about the indispensable value of a four-year college course, of the unwisdom of interrupting college life abruptly in the middle and subjecting the student to the necessity of orienting himself afresh in a new community; of the undesirability of remaining too long in a single institution like a high school; of the unwisdom of foregoing the larger atmosphere of the bona fide college, etc.

It seems not altogether improbable that we may for a time meet in an aggravated way the type of criticism now universal in every well-bred college where it is good form to complain of the poor training with which Freshmen come up from the high schools and academies. It seems not improbable that by virtue of the fact that a considerable number of schools may be tempted into this advanced work prematurely, and that they may fail to secure reasonable results thereby, we shall have to recognize a great deal of such criticism as well founded and just. On the other hand, it is to be said that the experience of the University of California with the students of a number of the junior-college high schools has shown them abundantly able to carry the advanced college work. In many instances they have done this even better than the students trained immediately on the grounds. Colleges which have been receiving students from the Joliet school and from the Lane and Crane technical schools would, I am sure, in many instances give an absolutely identical verdict. The college is of course entirely justified in asking that if students are to be received into its advanced courses they should really be able to carry their work with success. It may well occur that for a time, if not indefinitely, the colleges will be justified in regarding credentials from these institutions as subject to confirmation by the manner in which the later work of the student is conducted. This practice obtains in the handling of exchange credentials as between institutions of strictly collegiate rank, and need not be interpreted as containing any invidious reflection upon the persons party to it. It does not appear to the present speaker that the colleges have anything to fear from the dangers which are intrinsic to the principle of the

junior college based on the high-school foundations except the loss in student attendance, and this, as has already been repeated, is to most of the large institutions a welcome and not an unwelcome prospect. Friction of adjustment there undoubtedly will be, and the soul of the temperamentally conservative kind is sure to be troubled by this new program. Others need feel no solicitude, and on the contrary may justly welcome the movement as in the line of wholesome educational progress, and as one which it behooves the universities to foster and aid with wise counsel and kindly sympathy.

From the point of view of the schools it seems clear, as has been earlier indicated, that the addition of one or two years of college work is fraught with some dangers unless the financial support for the enterprise is reasonably generous, unless the qualifications of the teachers are thoroughly sound, unless the laboratory and library facilities are adequate, and unless the local demand for such an institution is genuine and reasonably energetic. To undertake such work without adequate equipment of staff and teachers is seriously to overstrain the extant resources of the school both in personnel and in equipment, is to invite failure or very mediocre success, and therefore in the long run is likely to sacrifice public confidence and set back the general movement because of shortcomings which are intrinsic to the local situation and in no sense to the system as such.

The interests of the general public are fundamentally touched at every point of the situation. Ambitious principals and superintendents are likely to be injudiciously stimulated to premature developments of the junior-college movement in communities which are financially not able to afford proper support, and which really represent too trifling a demand to justify the necessary expenditures. On the other hand, phlegmatic or reactionary school authorities are likely in some communities to discourage and unduly postpone the development of institutions of this type where the community is abundantly able to afford support, and where a service of unquestioned value could be rendered both to the community and to its young people. Communities may certainly demand that institutions of this character be peculiarly

sensitive to local needs and that the junior college be not simply an ambitious attempt to copy the first two years of the conventional college program. The whole question of the system of taxation by which these institutions are to be supported and the relation of that system to the support of state institutions requires careful and thoughtful consideration. In states with a strong and well-organized state university there is no reason why the most intimate and helpful co-operation should not exist as between the state and local institutions. The one thing which the communities ought most strenuously to insist upon, and the one for which it is perhaps least likely that there will be intelligent appreciation in advance, is the need of thoroughly competent and well-paid instructors to carry on this new work.

It would in my judgment be a great mistake to view the movement as purely an administrative rearrangement of our college work. The meaning of the matter seems to me to lie much deeper than that. If I mistake not, it is one symptom simply, but one fraught with immense potential consequences, of a renaissance of communal interest in higher education, of which the first great wave gave us our noble state universities and our agricultural and engineering schools. This, which has been gathering strength for several years in the evolution of the high school proper, promises in a similar way to bring opportunities for advanced vocational training to the very doors of thousands of boys and girls previously denied them, to offer to thousands of others who really are prepared to profit by them the various forms of collegiate education, and in general to disseminate in the commonwealth more widely than ever before the desire for sound learning whose perfect fruit is sanity of judgment and sobriety of citizenship.